

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

Listing Of The Claims:

1-10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) A method for improving a visibility in a motor vehicle, comprising:

illuminating an area by at least one light source of the motor vehicle through a first optical apparatus;

producing a sensor signal by at least one infrared sensor of the motor vehicle ~~when a person is situated in the area illuminated by the light source, the sensor signal coupled through a second optical apparatus;~~

~~comparing the sensor signal to a source signal supplied by an amplifier, the sensor signal and the source signal being compared in a comparator, wherein a greater value for the sensor signals indicates a person is situated in the area illuminated by the light source; and~~

~~controlling the light source dependent on the sensor signal, wherein the light source is shut off by a corresponding signal sent by the comparator to an actuated switching element.~~

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the at least one light source includes at least one of (a) a headlamp that illuminates at least in a near-infrared wavelength range, (b) a laser and (c) at least one laser diode that emits light at least in the near-infrared wavelength range.

13. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

producing sensor signals by at least one of (a) at least one ultrasound sensor, (b) at least one radar sensor that operates in at least one of the following wavelength ranges: 24 GHz and 77 GHz, and (c) at least one video sensor.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

at least one of deactivating and activating the light source dependent on the sensor signal.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the light source is controlled dependent on the sensor signal in such a way that at least one of a spatial and temporal intensity of light of the light source assumes a value that is not dangerous to persons.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:
warning at least one present person by at least one of an acoustic and optical warning signal.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the sensor signal for controlling the light source is derived from the signal of the infrared sensor and from a signal of at least one additional sensor.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the infrared sensor is constructed in such a way that its detection area completely includes a beam of the light source, and its detection range is greater than a distance from the light source that results in eye damage.

19. (Currently Amended) A device for improving a visibility in a motor vehicle, comprising:
~~at least one light source of the motor vehicle, the light source illuminating an area of illumination;~~
a first optical apparatus through which the light source illuminates an area of illumination;
~~at least one infrared sensor of the motor vehicle, the sensor producing a sensor signal when a person is situated in the area illuminated by the light source;~~
a second optical apparatus, wherein the sensor signal is coupled through the second optical apparatus;
an amplifier to generate a source signal that is sent to the infrared sensor;
a comparator to compare the sensor signal to a source signal, wherein a greater value for the sensor signal indicates a person is situated in the area illuminated by the light source;
an actuated switching element that sends a corresponding signal to shutoff the light source when a person is situated in the area illuminated by the light source; and

at least one control unit controlling the light source as a function of the sensor signal.

20. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 19, wherein the device is used in a night vision system in the motor vehicle.

21. (New) The device according to claim 19, wherein the device is applied in a rear area of the motor vehicle for use with an infrared-based camera.

22. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the at least one infrared sensor includes a pyroelectric sensor.

23. (New) The method according to claim 11, where in the first optical apparatus includes at least one lens.

24. (New) The method according to claim 11, where in the second optical apparatus includes at least one lens.

25. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the at least one infrared sensor includes a pyroelectric sensor, wherein the first optical apparatus includes at least one lens, and where in the second optical apparatus includes at least one lens.

26. (New) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

producing sensor signals by at least one of (a) at least one ultrasound sensor, (b) at least one radar sensor that operates in at least one of the following wavelength ranges: 24 GHz and 77 GHz, and (c) at least one video sensor;

at least one of deactivating and activating the light source dependent on the sensor signal;

warning at least one present person by at least one of an acoustic and optical warning signal;

wherein the at least one light source includes at least one of (a) a headlamp that illuminates at least in a near-infrared wavelength range, (b) a laser and (c) at least one laser diode that emits light at least in the near-infrared wavelength range,

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wherein the light source is controlled dependent on the sensor signal so that at least one of a spatial and temporal intensity of light of the light source assumes a value that is not dangerous to persons,

wherein the sensor signal for controlling the light source is derived from the signal of the infrared sensor and from a signal of at least one additional sensor, and

wherein the infrared sensor is constructed so that its detection area completely includes a beam of the light source, and its detection range is greater than a distance from the light source that results in eye damage.

27. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the at least one infrared sensor includes a pyroelectric sensor, wherein the first optical apparatus includes at least one lens, and where in the second optical apparatus includes at least one lens.